

New Year 2018: Catch Phrase- All Things New With Jesus

It's 2018, a brand new year. And a lot of people are trying to start the new year off on good foot with some changes, improvements & resolutions. For instance, my daughter & I started a 30-day nutrition program together. We here at the Journey Café are doing the same are starting some new thing. One thing we've been working on is a fitness program in the gagaball room. Another is an idea that Amie Ebling had. It's a question/suggestion box where you can anonymously ask something about God, Jesus, faith and those kinds of topics or give us a suggestion on how to improve things around here. Amie's going to keep tabs on that box & we'll quickly try to address those each week at Rock Us or one-on-one if you wish. We want you to know that there's no question too big for God. He wants you to know Him more, trust in Him more & love Him more.

And we're starting a new series tonight called *Catch Phrase*, which will take common idiomatic phrases & see what God can reveal to us about life through them. For instance, I've found that there's a who list of these phrases revolving around the word "New" 1.) Can't teach an old dog **new** tricks; 2.) There's a **new** kid on the block; 3.) It's a whole **new** ballgame; 3.) I got a **new** lease on life and 4.) I feel like a **new** man. 5.) It's good as **new**. 6.) I've turned over a **new** leaf. Before Jesus came, the devil was in charge, wrecking lives like the rotten bully he is. The devil was up to his game plan of deceiving people for a long time & he didn't change his plan because "you can't teach an old dog new tricks". Even though we were falling for the devil's old tricks & losing the game, Jesus came into the world, He became the "new kid on the block". Jesus completely shook up the devil's plan & defeated the devil & now "it's a whole new ballgame". We were slaves to sin, which owned & controlled us. But Jesus bought & paid for us on the cross with His blood & now we have a "new lease on life" (**Rom 5:18**). Any slave that's been rescued from the chains is now free & "feels like a new man (or woman)" (**1Cor 5:17**). And now "it's as good as new" because Jesus did this for us & restored our relationship with God (like it was when the world was new in the Garden of Eden, so now our life & our future is "good as new". Jesus said this near the very end of the Bible, "Look, I am making everything new. (**Rev 21:5**). So if you've come to accept the new life in Jesus & His amazing gift of salvation, "turn over a new leaf" and don't go back to the old ways that were destroying you (**Col 3:5-15**).

Our mission here at the Journey is to help you to experience God's love through His Son Jesus Christ. We want to have the same help, hope & joy that we have in Jesus. If you haven't noticed, this world is really crashing down. All of these things are sharply on the increase:

- *sexually transmitted disease (sharp rise in STD's, 2 million new cases of Chlamydia, Syphilis & Gonorrhea in 2016),*
- *children born out of wedlock (64% of millennial mothers gave birth out of wedlock),*
- *drug abuse (opiod addiction up 500% in 7 years),*
- *death by drug overdose (52,000 in 2015 up to 59,000 in 2016),*
- *mental illness (depression among teens quadrupled from 2005 to 2015),*
- *self-harm up among teens (particularly girls which tripled from 2009 to 2016),*
- *suicide way up (45,000/year includes >5,000 teens)*
- *suicide way up among teens, up 40% among girls & 30 among boys from 2010 to 2015*
- *The world that increasingly says "do whatever you want" & increasingly rejects God: atheism up significantly from 2007 to 2014*

What the world is offering you (sex, possession, various "highs", money, power) simply isn't working! The reality is that there is one all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God who made everything (including you). This great God loves you & has a new & incredible life for you. You are not just a group of random cells or "a mistake" because God doesn't make mistakes. You are God's highest creation. God loves you and accepts you where you are, but He loves you too much to leave you where you are. He wants to heal you heart, mind & life & give you eternal life through His son Jesus (who died for you so you could be free from the sin, guilt & shame of your life & so you could enter into an eternal relationship with God – the way He intended it to be like in the Garden of Eden). It's our mission here at the Journey Café to teach you about all this so that why we're starting the God Box to help answer your questions about God, Jesus & faith. So whatever it is this new year, we encourage you to ask questions, give us suggestions, seek God first & more (**Mt 6:33**), do something in the name of Jesus to help someone else, get involved in our teams here. You will be blessed & this year could be the best ever!

Key Verses

Rom 5:18 (NCV) Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

1Cor 5:17 (NCV) This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Col 3:5-15 (NCV) So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and greed. This is really serving a false god. ⁶These things make God angry. ⁷In your past, evil life you also did these things. ⁸But now also put these things out of your life: anger, bad temper, doing or saying things to hurt others, and using evil words when you talk. ⁹Do not lie to each other. You have left your old sinful life and the things you did before. ¹⁰You have begun to live the new life, in which you are being made new and are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. ¹¹In the new life there is no difference between [any of you]. But Christ is in all believers, and Christ is all that is important. ¹²God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So you should always clothe yourselves with mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with each other, and forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴Even more than all this, clothe yourself in love. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking, because you were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful.

Rev 21:5a The One who was sitting on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything new!"

Mt 6:33 Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well.

Discussion Questions

1. How did you celebrate the New Year? What was your main highlight from the recent holidays?
2. What are your hopes for this New Year? Are you planning on doing any new things or changing anything?
3. Dan read a lot of statistics sad tonight about the world today [in italics above]. Why aren't the world's ways aren't working?
4. Read Rom 5:18. The skit was about receiving the gift of new, eternal thru Jesus. How can Jesus give us a new lease on life & reverse the terrible trends we just talked about?
5. Read 1 Cor 5:17. Those in Jesus are new men & new women. How has Jesus given you new life? What's changed in your life?
6. We're going to read a long passage about new life in Jesus. Let's soak up God's Word in **Col 3:5-15** and see what He's trying to tell us about what needs to change in our lives this New Year. (After reading passage, ask "*What needs to change?*")
7. Read Rev 21:5 & Mt 6:33. God promises to make "all things new" as we "seek Him first" in all things. God loves you & wants to bless you; He's a gentleman & won't force Himself on you. You've got to be willing to receive the new life He offers in Jesus. Does anyone want to receive new, eternal life in Jesus here tonight?

PRAYER: Dear God, help us to fully receive the gift of new life in your Son Jesus. Help us discard the ways of the world & of the devil that are destroying us. Give us new life, new hope, new vision & new blessings this year as we seek You more deeply & as we become more like Jesus.